Introduction

• The mental health epidemic has been especially impactful among college populations. Since 2013, rates of mental health symptoms have skyrocketed.¹

• Despite these drastic increases in symptomatology, there has not been a compensatory increase in help-seeking behavior. Among those aged 18-25, 43.9% report unmet needs.²

• Students of minoritized identities are experiencing mental health concerns at elevated rates, with the COVID-19 pandemic contributing to increased vulnerability.¹, 3-4

• Interventions are needed to accommodate for the increasing diversity and mental health needs of college students.

The Present Study

• The present study tested the feasibility and acceptability of a group-based, college student-adaption of IPT (IPT-CS).

• 18 eligible participants were randomized into IPT-CS or referral to usual care.

• Group demographics can be seen in Figures 2 and 3.

• Participants received a pre-intervention survey with a battery of assessments and demographics questions, weekly mental health assessments, and a post-intervention survey with the same assessments as well as open-ended questions about their experiences with the intervention.

Recommendations for Future Practice

• Most frameworks for multi-cultural practice are geared towards relatively tight-knit communities.

• The multicultural orientation framework (MCO) is a better suited model because it can account for the wide variety of cultures present on college campuses.⁷

• MCO therapies are made up of three components: cultural humility, cultural opportunities, and cultural comfort.⁸

Cultural Humility

• Providers should acknowledge the limitations of their cultural awareness as different cultures may have conflicting views on mental health and the therapeutic relationship.⁹

• College students with diverse backgrounds face added stressors based on assimilation to the dominant culture and integration of their own identity.⁸-¹⁰

• As the students in our sample mentioned enjoying the social aspects of group therapy, therapists should be aware of potential microaggressions, and the negative impact they can have on the therapeutic alliance and group cohesion.

Cultural Opportunities

• Concealment of cultural identity during the therapeutic process is associated with negative outcomes.¹²

• Microaggressions are a common occurrence in group therapy with diverse clients and can harm group cohesion.¹³

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Cultural Comfort

• Perceived cultural comfort of the therapist by clients is associated with greater decreases in distress.¹⁴

• Therapists can increase perceptions of cultural comfort by using the client’s language, suggesting culturally-acceptable coping mechanisms, and specifically asking for feedback.

• Students in our sample frequently reported preferring direct advice to more general psychoeducation. Therapists should engage in open dialogue to ensure the metaphors and examples they use are culturally relevant.